

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

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Sunday, January 5, 1969 -- 5:15 p.m.

Mr. President:

Herewith a CIA evaluation of the  
Czechoslovakian alert of their ground  
forces which Mr. Rostow informed you  
of earlier.

*Charles Hayden*  
Charles Hayden  
Situation Room

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Authority NJ-001-180-2-7  
By SJ, NARA, Date 4-5-06

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Czechoslovakia

The high state of alert ordered for Czechoslovakia's armed forces on 5 January was probably a precautionary measure in preparation for a televised speech later in the day by the controversial liberal chairman of the parliament, Josef Smrkovsky.

Under the new federalized system of government his job is up for grabs and there has been strong pressure from conservatives to dump him. Young people and workers have risen to his defense in a well publicized campaign, and they have threatened strikes and demonstrations if he is forced out.

We do not yet have a text of Smrkovsky's speech, but excerpts broadcast by Prague Radio indicate that he said his fate was not yet settled. He seemed also to be hinting that he would step down, but it is not at all clear. We expect to get a text later on tonight. So far there has been no report of trouble in Prague.

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By SL, NARA, Date 4-5-01

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but the alert may last for  
some time yet.

The leadership is justifiably  
nervous. On 4 January, the party  
presidium warned that the campaign  
to preserve key liberals in top  
posts had complicated relations with  
Czechoslovakia's Communist allies  
and that this could lead to a  
new crisis.

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